

Ordeal of children trapped in cycle of grinding poverty

■ Kids in inner-city Manchester poorest

■ Loans 'are keeping families on breadline'

CHRIS OSUH

INNER city Manchester is home to the poorest children in the country.

New figures reveal that more families are on the breadline in the Manchester Central constituency than anywhere else.

A total of 52 per cent of children in Ancoats and Clayton, Ardwick, Bradford, the city centre, Hulme, Moss Side, Miles Platting, Newton Heath and Whalley Range live in

homes dependent on benefits, the figures reveal.

The researchers from charity End Child Poverty defined poor families as those dependent on benefits in the year up to April 2006.

The statistics shows a drop of two per cent on Manchester's poverty total when compared with figures released in January.

The results are broken down further using council ward boundaries to reveal that the poorest children in Greater Manchester live in Moss Side.

In the south Manchester neighbourhood, 61 per cent of families are officially on the breadline.

This makes Moss Side the seventh poorest community in the country. Harpurhey, Hulme

TEN poorest constituencies in the country

- 1 Manchester Central 52%
- 2 Poplar and Canning Town, east London 48%
- 3 Liverpool Riverside 48%
- 4 Hackney South and Shoreditch, east London 48%
- 5 Islington South and Finsbury, north London 47%
- 6 Glasgow north east 47%
- 7 Tottenham, north London 47%
- 8 Bethnal Green and Bow 46%
- 9 Regents park and Kensington north 45%
- 10 Holborn and St Pancras 43%

and Blackfriars in Salford were also in the top 20, with well over 50 per cent of families dependent on benefits.

In contrast, Altrincham and Sale are two of the most affluent areas in the country, with only 10 per cent of children living in poverty.

Niall Cooper, of the Manchester-based national charity, Church Action on Poverty, said: "Poorer families need to get access to better paid jobs and we would also support the idea of a 'living wage' which is higher than the minimum wage."

He added: "Manchester in particular has a high reliance on doorstep lending which can lead struggling families struggling into a cycle of debt."

MP Tony Lloyd told the

TEN poorest wards in the country

- 1 Knowsley Princess 65%
- 2 Liverpool, Everton 65%
- 3 Liverpool, Granby 65%
- 4 Liverpool, Breckfield 64%
- 5 Glasgow, Keppochill 62%
- 6 Glasgow, Bridgeton/Dalmarnock 61%
- 7 Manchester, Moss Side 61%
- 8 Liverpool, Vauxhall 61%
- 9 Newcastle upon Tyne, West City 60%
- 10 Glasgow, Queenslie 60%

M.E.N. he had been in talks with the Treasury about the issue. He said: "We know Manchester Central has long been one of the poorest parts of Britain. In the Seventies and Eight-

ies, the area was devastated by unemployment and child poverty has come out of this."

Mr Lloyd said that the government had invested billions in helping the poorest through schemes like tax credits, as well as introduced a minimum wage.

Nearly three million children live in poverty nationwide and the government is setting up a unit to half the rate by 2010.

Laura Payne, of End Child Poverty, said the figures were an 'underestimate' of the problem because it was based only on statistics for families dependent on benefits.

She added: "It's essential for the government to keep its promise to millions of children across the country by making a sizeable investment."

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GRIM REALITY Moss Side ranks as the seventh most deprived community nationwide Photograph Paul Burrows